As can be seen, poverty has declined significantly during this period, and the unemployment rate has fluctuated over the years at a relatively low level within a fairly narrow band.

(b) In view of (a) above, does not arise.

(c) and (d) The Ninth Plan has singled out agriculture as an area of priority in view of its potential to generate substantially greater employment per unit of investment than most other sectors of the economy. The issue of backwardness and regional balance has always been a central concern of state policy. All available evidence suggests that reduction in regional disparities, particularly in average standards of living, may be better achieved through greater focus on agriculture and other rural activities. A thrust on agricultural development would necessarily imply accelerated growth of the relatively backward regions.

Impact of structural reforms policies in different sectors

3385. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what has been the impact of structural reform policies adotped in different sectors since 1991 on poverty levels both urban and rural;

(b) whether it is a fact that structural reform policies have failed to make any appreciable dent on rural as well as urban poverty; and

(c) if so, how Government proposes to correct the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) to (c) The Planning Commission estimates poverty at national and state level from the large sample survey data on consumer expenditure collected by the National Sample Survey Organisation. These surveys are conducted once in approximately five years. The latest estimates of poverty are available for the year 1993-94 based on the National Sample Survey data on consumer expenditure of the 50th Round. Since 1991, the estimates of poverty are available for one year only. Hence, it is not possible to assess the impact of structural reform policies adopted in different sectors on

poverty. However, comparing two latest estimates, 1987-88 and 1993-94, it is observed that the percentage of people living below the poverty line declined by 1.82 percentage point in rural areas and 5.84 percentage point in urban areas. Data from the latest large sample survey is expected to become available by the end of the year.

Growing Regional Imbalance in Orissa

3386. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the growing regional imbalances in Orissa;

(b) whether any study has been conducted to find out the reasons for regional imbalance in that State;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken to reduce the imbalance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) to (d) As planning and development of an area and allocation of funds for the purpose are primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Government, Planning Commission has not conducted any specific study to find out the reasons for regional imbalances in Orissa. However, the Central Government supplements the efforts of the State Governments in the removal of regional imbalances through appropriate weightage in the formula used for distribution of normal Cental Assistance.

Further, to deal with the basic problems of the undivided districts of Koraput, Bolangir and Kalahandi (KBK) in Orissa, the Government of Orissa was asked to prepare the Revised Long Term Action Plan (1998-99 To 2006-07) which consists of Central Plan and Centrally Sponsored Schemes in various sectors, namely agricultural, horticulture, watershed development, afforestation, irrigation, health, drinking water, emergency feeding, welfare of SCs/STs and rural connectivity.